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FM AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1347
INFO RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE 3959
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE 9681
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO IMMEDIATE 4562
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA IMMEDIATE 9664
RUEHBK/AMEMBASSY BEIJING IMMEDIATE 4306
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD IMMEDIATE 2552
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO IMMEDIATE 0837
RUEHNW/AMEMBASSY OSLO IMMEDIATE 0226
RUEAAIA/CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
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RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
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C O N F I D E N T I A L KATHMANDU 001154

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TAGS: PREL EAID PGOV PTER NP

SUBJECT: NORWAY'S ERIK SOLHEIM VISITS NEPAL

REF: OSLO 543

Classified By: Ambassador James F. Moriarty, Reasons, 1.4 (b/d).

Norway Looking to Support the Government ...

¶1. (C) Norwegian Minister for International Development Erik Solheim briefed members of the international community on his four-day visit to Nepal May 5, stressing that Norway wanted to show support for the government of Nepal (GON). He said he had assured PM Koirala that Norway would resume its development assistance to Nepal, which was curtailed after the King's February 2005 takeover. Solheim said that in his conversations with the government he found the GON desired "witnesses," not facilitators, for its negotiations with the Maoists. The GON also indicated it understood the need for Indian approval of any peace agreement with the Maoists.

... But Expresses Worrisome Views

¶2. (C) Solheim asserted that it was unrealistic to expect the Maoists to give up their weapons before the completion of a peace process, and that constituent assembly elections were just one step in that process. The international community should not expect the Maoists to give up their weapons to participate in the elections, although Solheim suggested that the Maoists might put their weapons under temporary "monitoring." The Ambassador replied that Maoists had used their weapons to terrorize the populace of 4,000 villages. There was no countervailing force to prevent the Maoists from using their weapons to influence an election. The Ambassador stressed that Maoist actions in recent days had not put people in a comfort zone. Extortion was soaring. Solheim acknowledged that the GON was worried about extortion, but noted his personal view that extortion historically decreased during a cease-fire. The Ambassador pointed out that in Nepal the opposite was true. Hundred of Maoists were roaming around freely, knocking on people's doors and demanding money, including in the Kathmandu Valley. The Sri Lankan Ambassador added that the cease-fires in Sri Lanka had also resulted in increased extortion.

Comment

¶3. (C) We are worried that outside "experts" will fall into the trap of trying to apply inappropriate models to Nepal. Unlike many other countries, Nepal's Maoists are an insurgency that still has hope it can win and has not given up its goal of attaining power. The worst thing the international community could do is to pretend publicly that it is certain that the Maoists are willing to come in from the cold. Such assertions by foreign groups pressure the government, rather than the Maoists, to compromise core principles, such as denying the Maoists the right to participate in an interim government or in elections while they bear weapons.

MORIARTY